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Application Serial No. 09/177,700REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kumar et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,006,253) in view of Skarbo et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,546,447), and further rejected claims 5 and 17-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al. in view of Pepper et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,930,700).

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over a combination of Kumar et al. in view of Skarbo et al. With regard to independent claim 1, for example, the Examiner alleged that the combination of Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al. discloses the invention substantially as claimed. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Kumar et al. discloses an H.323 system that provides a back-channel for receiver terminals in a loosely-coupled conference (col. 2, lines 46-63; Fig. 1). Skarbo et al., on the other hand, discloses a system that receives a caller telephone number, uses the caller telephone number to search a caller database to retrieve caller identification information, and displays the information in a pop-up window on a display screen (col. 3, lines 51-65; col. 6, lines 10-16).

By contrast, the present invention recited in independent claim 1, for example, includes a combination of features, including a gateway and a signal routing agent. The gateway communicates with a switched circuit network and translates switched circuit network-compatible signals into computer network-compatible signals. The signal routing agent communicates with the gateway and with one or more terminals. The signal routing agent receives plural incoming calls from the gateway addressed to a selected one of the terminals and

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simultaneously transmits plural line appearance signals that identify origins of the incoming calls to the selected terminal.

Neither Kumar et al. nor Skarbo et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination, discloses or suggests this claimed combination of features. Among other things, none of the references, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests a signal routing agent that receives plural incoming calls and simultaneously transmits plural line appearance signals that identify the origins of the incoming calls to a selected terminal.

The Examiner admitted that Kumar et al. does not disclose this feature (Office Action, page 2). The Examiner alleged that Skarbo et al. discloses a system that includes a telephone interface that receives incoming calls and logic for searching and displaying a caller name and caller telephone number on a user terminal (Office Action, pages 2-3).

The Examiner does not assert that Skarbo et al. discloses a signal routing agent that simultaneously transmits plural line appearance signals that identify the origins of incoming calls to the selected terminal, as recited in claim 1. In fact, Skarbo et al. does not disclose this feature. Instead, Skarbo et al. discloses displaying caller identification information corresponding to a single call on a display screen (Fig. 5; col. 6, lines 10-16), not plural line appearance signals, as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, none of the references cited by the Examiner discloses or suggests a signal routing agent that receives plural incoming calls addressed to a selected terminal and simultaneously transmits plural line appearance signals that identify the origins of the incoming calls to the selected terminal. As such, the Examiner has failed to establish a prima facie case.

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The rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) with regard to claim 1 is, therefore, improper and should be withdrawn.

In addition, the Examiner has not explained how and why one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicants' invention would have been motivated to combine the various features of Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al. Indeed, Applicants believe that it would not be reasonable to combine features of a system that provides a back-channel for receiver terminals in a loosely-coupled conference (Kumar et al.) with a system for displaying caller identification information in a computer system (Skarbo et al.).

The only apparent motivation for combining the references is found in Applicants' own disclosure which, of course, may not properly be relied upon to support the ultimate legal conclusion of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Absent such impermissible hindsight reasoning, one of ordinary skill in the art, having the Kumar et al. reference, would not have been motivated to modify the reference in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

Further, neither of the references suggests the modification of references set forth by the Examiner. For example, Skarbo et al. provides no reason for combining the disclosed caller identification system with the loosely-coupled conferencing system of Kumar et al. Therefore, the Examiner's combination of the references is improper.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is patentable over Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination. Claims 2-8 depend from claim 1 and, therefore, are patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons given with regard to claim 1.

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Independent claim 9 recites a combination of features, including a signal routing agent, a gateway, and at least one gatekeeper. The gateway receives an incoming call and translates the call into computer network-compatible signals. The gatekeeper communicates with the gateway and in response to receipt of the incoming call, controls the gateway to transmit the computer network-compatible signals to the signal routing agent. The signal routing agent, in response to receipt of the computer network-compatible signals, identifies corresponding ones of the terminals assigned to receive the computer network-compatible signals and transmits line appearance messages that identify the origin of the incoming call to each of the terminals.

Neither Kumar et al. nor Skarbo et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination, discloses or suggests this claimed combination of features. Among other things, neither of the references, alone or in combination, discloses or suggests a signal routing agent that receives computer network-compatible signals corresponding to an incoming call, identifies corresponding terminals assigned to receive the signals, and transmits line appearance messages that identify the origin of the incoming call to each of the terminals.

The Examiner asserted that Kumar et al. discloses a gatekeeper that provides control access over a network in such a way that the gatekeeper is connected with a gateway and a MCU (Office Action, page 4). The Examiner failed, however, to address the features described above. The disclosure of Skarbo et al. fails to cure these deficiencies in the disclosure of Kumar et al. Therefore, the Examiner has failed to establish a prima facie case. The rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) with regard to claim 9 is, therefore, improper and should be withdrawn.

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Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 9 is patentable over Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination. Claims 10-14 depend from claim 9 and, therefore, are patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons given with regard to claim 9.

Independent claim 15 recites features similar to claims 1 and 9. For example, claim 15 recites "transmitting plural line appearance signals that identify origins of the incoming calls to each of the end-points." Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al. do not disclose or suggest this feature. Claim 15 is, therefore, patentable over the cited references for reasons similar to those given with regard to claims 1 and 9. Claim 16 depends from claim 15 and, therefore, is patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons given with regard to claim 15.

Independent claim 17 recites features similar to claim 9. For example, claim 17 recites accessing a configuration database to identify the terminals corresponding to the dialed number and transmitting line appearance signals to each of the identified terminals. Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al. do not disclose these features. Therefore, claim 17 is patentable over the cited references for reasons similar to those given with regard to claim 9. Claim 18 depends from claim 17 and, therefore, is patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons given with regard to claim 17.

Independent claim 19 recites a combination of features of a method for establishing an attendant/attendee relationship between plural terminal end-points via an H.323-based communication system. The method includes creating a configuration database storing attendant and attendee relationships between respective ones of the terminal end-points; receiving an

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incoming call addressed to a particular number; accessing the configuration database to determine if the number corresponds to an attendant or attendee terminal end-point; if the number corresponds to an attendant terminal end-point, transmitting a line appearance that identifies an origin of the incoming call to the attendant terminal end-point; and if the number corresponds to an attendee terminal end-point, transmitting line appearances that identify the origin of the incoming call to the attendee terminal end-point and to the attendant terminal end-point associated in the configuration database with the attendee.

Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al. are silent with regard to an attendant/attendee relationship, where if a number corresponds to an attendant terminal end-point, a line appearance that identifies an origin of the incoming call is transmitted to the attendant terminal end-point, and if the number corresponds to an attendee terminal end-point, line appearances that identify the origin of the incoming call are transmitted to the attendee terminal end-point and to the attendant terminal end-point associated in a configuration database with the attendee. In the Office Action, the Examiner did not address these particular features.

For these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 19 is patentable over Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination. If the rejection is maintained, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner specifically address these features.

The Examiner further rejected claims 5 and 17-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al. in view of Pepper et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection.

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With regard to dependent claim 5, Applicants submit that the disclosure of Pepper et al. fails to cure the deficiencies in the disclosures of Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al. described above. Claim 5 is, therefore, patentable over Kumar et al., Skarbo et al., and Pepper et al. for at least the reasons given with respect to claim 1.

With regard to independent claim 17, Applicants submit that the disclosure of Pepper et al. fails to cure the deficiencies in the disclosures of Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al. described above. For example, like Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al., Pepper et al. fails to disclose identifying corresponding ones of the terminals assigned to receive the computer network-compatible signals and transmitting line appearance messages that identify an origin of the incoming call to each of the terminals, as recited in claim 17. For at least these reasons and the reasons given with regard to claim 9, claim 17 is patentable over Kumar et al., Skarbo et al., and Pepper et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination.

Further, the Examiner did not address each of the features recited in claim 17. For example, the Examiner did not address translating an incoming call into an H323-compatible signal, accessing a configuration database to identify the terminals corresponding to the dialed telephone number, and transmitting line appearance signals to each of the identified terminals. Therefore, the Examiner failed to establish a prima facie case. Therefore, the rejection of claim 17 is improper and should be withdrawn.

Claim 18 depends from claim 17 and, therefore is patentable over Kumar et al., Skarbo et al., and Pepper et al. for at least the reasons given with regard to claim 17.

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With regard to independent claim 19, Applicants submit that the disclosure of Pepper et al. fails to cure the deficiencies in the disclosures of Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al. described above. For example, like Kumar et al. and Skarbo et al., Pepper et al. fails to disclose an attendant/attendee relationship, where if a number corresponds to an attendant terminal end-point, a line appearance that identifies an origin of the incoming call is transmitted to the attendant terminal end-point, and if the number corresponds to an attendee terminal end-point, line appearances that identify the origin of the incoming call are transmitted to the attendee terminal end-point and to the attendant terminal end-point associated in a configuration database with the attendee, as recited in claim 19. For at least these reasons, claim 19 is patentable over Kumar et al., Skarbo et al., and Pepper et al., whether taken alone or in any reasonable combination.

Further, the Examiner did not address the features recited in claim 19 and, therefore, failed to establish a prima facie case. Therefore, the rejection of claim 19 is improper and should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and allowance of the pending claims.

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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 07-2339 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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